

ABSTRACT

A lamp lighting system allows dimming of a compact gas discharge lamp to a low light output level without perceptible flicker. When the system receives a request to dim the lamp to the low level, the lamp is operated at an intermediate output level prior to operating the lamp at the requested low level. When the lamp cools to below a threshold temperature, the lamp is then operated at the requested low level. In one embodiment, the lamp is dimmed from its full rated output level to 1% of its full rated output level. The intermediate level is approximately 2% to 5% of this full rated level. No flicker is perceived when the lamp level is reduced from the full rated level to the low level. Upon cooling, no flicker and no change in output level are perceived when the lamp is subsequently reduced from the intermediate level to the low level.